

## MISCELLANY

From time to time in this department of California and Western Medicine, appear columns grouped under the following headings: Comment on Current and Recent Articles in this Journal; News; Medical Economics; Readers' Forum; California State Board of Health; and California Board of Medical Examiners. For Book Reviews, see index on the front cover, under Miscellany.

## NEWS

**Meeting of Western Branch American Urological Association.**—The annual meeting of the Western Branch of the American Urological Association will be held September 13 to 15, the first day in San Francisco and the second two days at Del Monte. Papers will be presented by a number of prominent Eastern and Western urologists. All physicians are cordially invited to attend.

## READERS' FORUM

### File of Transactions of California Medical Association In California State Library at Sacramento

The following letter has to do with the file of transactions of the California Medical Association which is in the possession of the State Library of California.

It will be noted that certain issues are missing. The state librarian, Mr. Milton J. Ferguson, will appreciate the coöperation of any members who would permit the state of California to complete its files. It is desirable that the State Library should have a complete file. Any members who can aid in this work are requested to do so through the office of the secretary of the California Medical Association, so that our own organization may know the names of members who have historical data. The letter follows:

To the Editors:

The State Library has the following transactions of the California State Medical Society:

- 1, 2, 3 sessions for 1856-58.
- 1, 2, 3, 4 sessions for 1870-74 (after reorganization).
- 7 sessions for 1876-77.
- 9 sessions for 1878-79.
- 20 sessions for 1890.
- 23 - 30 sessions for 1892-1900.

Also *California State Journal of Medicine* and *CALIFORNIA AND WESTERN MEDICINE*, V. 2, 1904—to date.

If you can aid the State Library in filling in its file of the transactions and also help us to secure the first volume of the *California State Medical Journal* we will be most grateful. The State Library files should be complete.

Very truly yours,  
MILTON J. FERGUSON, *State Librarian*.

## MEDICAL ECONOMICS

### OUTLINE OF STUDIES \*

#### PART II

#### Studies on the Cost to the Family of Medical Services and the Return Accruing to the Physician and Other Agents Furnishing Such Services

6. *The Cost of Sickness, During a Twelve Months Period, Among Various Representative Population Groups, Including the Incidence of Sickness.*—Surveys would be made in a large city, a small city and a rural community.

The part of this study dealing with the incidence of sickness would be similar to that conducted by the

\* This is the second part of Outline of Studies on "Cost of Medical Care." Part I was printed in the July issue.

United States Public Health Service in Hagerstown, Maryland, but it would deal with a larger number of families and with all economic groups.

The investigation would furnish data not only as to the number of cases of illness treated by local practitioners, but it would also deal with the frequency of the physician's calls. In this connection, it would be illuminating to consider the present day relation between the individual physician and the individual patient. In what proportion of cases is this the intimate relation of the past, and in what proportion of cases has a strange physician been called?

In addition, the study would reveal the number of cases of sickness treated by cultists, the number prescribed for by druggists, and the number treated at home or not treated at all. A physician in Philadelphia questioned his private patients for a period of four years regarding their experience with cults and found that 34 per cent of them had patronized one or more irregular practitioners within three months of the time they called him. It is hardly likely that the results of this investigation represent conditions throughout the country; but no one knows what proportion of sick people are attended by osteopaths, chiropractors, Christian Scientists and other cultists. The facts might be surprising. It is time that they were made available. Similarly the kind of dental service obtained should also be taken into account.

The extent to which illnesses are treated free by physicians, dentists, nurses, clinics and hospitals should be carefully considered, and the extent to which patients desiring to pay in full for services have been unable to do so.

The investigation should take into account the adequacy of medical care for various specific illnesses or types of illnesses provided by individual private physicians, by hospitals, by clinics and by other agencies. The extent to which medical treatment is applied at a stage when prevention is possible might also be considered. It is possible that this particular part of the study would have to be supplemented by medical research work among selected cases in regard to the quality of treatment.

The principal part of the study would show what proportion of the annual budget is spent by families or individuals for the care of sickness and the promotion of health. Studies of this kind have already been undertaken by the Federal Government. It is suggested that the subject be pursued into somewhat greater detail, with particular reference to

(a) The amounts expended by or for families of various incomes for certain types of illness and for preventive service;

(b) The distribution of these expenditures, with emphasis on the fallacies involved in utilizing "average" figures.

This study would supply data much sought for as a basis for budget making and for determining eligibility for charitable aid. Such a study is much needed to show that while average figures of family expenditure for care of health are useful as a basis for estimating the cost of sickness to the community, these average figures cannot be applied in judging the resources needed by individual families for the adequate care of the health of their members during any given year.

The facts derived from such a study would throw light on the question,—How far is the insurance prin-